

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3216

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH AGHA SHAHI

1. AT A RECENT SOCIAL OCCASION I HAD A FAIRLY LONG TALK WITH AGHA SHAHI ABOUT THE FOREIGN RELATIONS ASPECTS OF BHUTTO'S PUNJAB SPEAKING TOUR AND ABOUT PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS.

2. ALTHOUGH I ORDINARILY TRY TO AVOID ANY OVERT CRITICISM OF BHUTTO'S ACTIONS IN MY TALKS WITH SHAHI, I DID FEEL I OUGHT TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN ABOUT THE "PAKISTAN UNDER SIEGE" RHETORIC HE HAD BEEN COMING OUT WITH IN HIS PUNJAB SPEECHES (ISLAMABAD 3176). SHAHI SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND MY UNEASINESS, BUT PROBABLY WAS SOMEWHAT MORE INCLINED TO WRITE OFF ITS ILL EFFECTS BY SAYING THAT OTHERS WOULD RECOGNIZE IT AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF LOCAL POLITICS IN THIS COUNTRY. HE SAID IN ACTUALITY THEY HAD EVERY DESIRE TO GO AHEAD WITH FURTHER TALKS UNDER THE SIMLA PROCESS AND HE WAS RATHER IMPATIENTLY AWAITING WORD FROM THE INDIANS ON THE SCHEDULING PROCESS. HE SEEMED TO THINK THAT DELAY ON THEIR PART WAS POLITICAL, BUT I CAUTIONED HE SHOULD NOT RULE OUT THAT THEY MIGHT INDEED HAVE COGENT SCHEDULING PROBLEMS.

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3. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS RE AFGHANISTAN I FOUND SHAHI

INCENSED THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UN HAD APPARENTLY AGREED TO PROCEED WITH INVESTIGATIONS OF AFGHAN ASSERTIONS RE BALUCHI REFUGEES, ETC. WITH NO CONTACT AT ALL WITH THE PAKISTANI SIDE. I SAID IF THIS WERE THE CASE, IT SEEMED TO ME HE HAD A POINT.

4. SHAHI SAID HE FELT CERTAIN THERE WAS NO SLOW-DOWN IN THE MOVEMENTS OF AFGHAN TRANSIT GOODS RESULTING FROM ANY POLITICAL DECISION HERE. HE SAID THAT IF THIS WERE IN FACT THE CASE, IT WAS WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE, AND HE DID NOT BELIEVE SUCH A DECISION COULD BE MADE WITHOUT HIS KNOWING OF IT. HE VOLUNTEERED AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, BUT I SUGGESTED HE DELAY UNTIL THE FACTS COULD BE TALKED ABOUT AT A LOWER LEVEL. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HE ACCEPTED THIS SUGGESTION AS HE SEEMED CONCERNED.

5. THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF THE DEGREE OF VITUPERATION THAT WAS BEING POURED FORTH IN THE PROPAGANDA ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER. I SAID THAT IT HAD REACHED A LEVEL OF INTENSITY WHICH REMINDED ME OF THE ILL-FATED DAYS BEFORE CLOSURE OF THE BORDER IN THE EARLY SIXTIES. I SAID IT ALSO WORRIED ME FROM A SECURITY VIEWPOINT AS REGARDS HEADS OF STATES PERSONALLY AS SLOGANS OF "KILL OUR ENEMY" WERE BEING MORE FREQUENTLY USED. AT ONE POINT SHAHI SAID THE PAK POLICY WAS NOT TO PERSONALIZE THEIR PROPAGANDA INTO ATTACKS ON DAOUD AS A PERSON. I TOLD HIM UNFORTUNATELY THE FACTS WERE OTHERWISE AND DAOUD WAS BEING PORTRAYED AS A BALD-HEADED IDIOT WHO WAS A TRAITOR TO ISLAM. SHAHI SEEMED SHOCKED. I BALANCED THIS, HOWEVER, BY GIVING SOME QUOTES OF THE VICIOUS SLANDER AGAINST BHUTTO PERSONALLY BY RADIO KABUL ENDING WITH THE SLOGAN OF "KILL, KILL, KILL", ETC. SHAHI ASKED IF I GOT THESE QUOTES FROM THEIR MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. I TOLD HIM I WAS GETTING THEM DIRECT FROM OUR OWN FBIS REPORTS. I TOLD HIM SOMETHING OF FBIS AS IT OPERATES ON A WORLDWIDE BASIS TO COUNTER THE IMPRESSION THAT MIGHT BE LEFT THAT WE WERE DELIBERATELY FOCUSING

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OUR COLLECTION EFFORTS ON PAK-AFGHAN MATTERS. HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS, SAYING THAT HE HAD OCCASIONALLY HAD ACCESS TO OUR FBIS PRODUCTS WHILE HE WAS AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

6. SHAHI ASKED IF I COULD GIVE HIM SAMPLES OF PAK BROADCASTS THAT I HAD REFERRED TO. I SAID I WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO AS HE DID NOT WANT TO GIVE THE

IMPRESSION THAT I WAS CONCENTRATING ONLY ON PAK PROPAGANDA AND IGNORING THAT FROM AFGHANISTAN. SHAHI PRESSED QUITE HARD FOR SPECIFIC QUOTES WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE OF GREAT USE TO HIM, SUGGESTING THAT I PASS IT TO HIM WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION AND THAT HE WOULD NOT DISCLOSE HIS SOURCE OF THE BROADCAST TEXTS. HE SAID NASIM AHMED WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAILY BROADCASTS AND IN THEIR MEETINGS HE WAS OFTEN VAGUE AND STEERED AWAY FROM SPECIFICS. I FINALLY AGREED TO PROVIDE SHAHI WITH SOME SAMPLES AS HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS IT IS ALL COLLECTED FROM UNCLASSIFIED AIRWAVES AND THERE IS NOTHING OF COURSE CLANDESTINE ABOUT ANYONE LISTENING IN ON PUBLIC BROADCASTS. IN ORDER THAT I MIGHT NOT BE ACCUSED OF BEING ONLY CRITICAL OF THE PAKS, I INCLUDED A FEW RECENT SAMPLES FROM RADIO KABUL AS WELL. I HAD THESE SAMPLES HAND-CARRIED TO HIM THIS MORNING ON PLAIN PAPER AND WITHOUT ANY TRANSMITTAL COMMUNICATION.

7. WHILE SHAHI MAY WELL HAVE BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PROPAGANDA MIGHT BE GETTING ROUGHER ON BOTH SIDES, I DEFINITELY DO NOT BELIEVE HE WAS AWARE OF THE SPECIFICS, WHICH ARE HANDLED BY OTHERS. I SUSPECT THAT WHAT WE MAY BE IN THE PROCESS OF DISCOVERING THAT TO SOME EXTENT THE RIGHT HAND WITHIN THE GOP MAY NOT BE AWARE OF WHAT THE LEFT HAND IS DOING. THIS IS NOT AN ABNORMAL STATE OF AFFAIRS, BUT MAY BE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN WHEN IT GETS INTO THE FIELD OF FOREIGN RELATIONS.

8. IN ANY EVENT, I DO NOT PLAN ON ANY FOLLOW-UP ON THIS AND DO NOT INTEND TO PROVIDE FURTHER FBIS MATERIALS; SHAHI CAN OBVIOUSLY MAKE ARRANGEMENTS
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TO BE KEPT INFORMED THROUGH HIS OWN RESOURCES AS DEPARTMENT AND KABUL ARE BOTH AWARE, I ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT IN CITING SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF THE MISDOINGS OF ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER OR IN SEEKING TO FOLLOW UP ON SPECIFIC ACCUSATIONS WE RUN SOME RISK OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN A QUASI-MEDIATORY ROLE, SOMETHING I CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT TO SEE US UNDERTAKE AT THIS TIME. IT DOES SEEM TO ME, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE TIMES, AND THIS MAY BE ONE OF THEM, WHEN A WELL-INFORMED WORD IN THE RIGHT EAR MIGHT JUST BE OF SOME HELP IN OUR MORE GENERAL EFFORTS TO URGE RESTRAINT ON THESE TWO NEIGHBORS.
BYROADE

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